

VZCZCXRO6876
OO RUEHROV RUEHTRO
DE RUEHKH #0637/01 1151155
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 241155Z APR 08
FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0651
INFO RUCNFUR/DARFUR COLLECTIVE
RUCNIAD/IGAD COLLECTIVE
RUEHGG/UN SECURITY COUNCIL COLLECTIVE
RHMFISS/CJTF HOA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KHARTOUM 000637

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR A/S FRAZER, S/E WILLIAMSON, AF/SPG, AF/C,
NSC FOR PITTMAN AND HUDSON
ADDIS ABABA FOR USAU

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/24/2018

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KPKO](#) [UN](#) [AU](#) [SU](#)

SUBJECT: PRESIDENTIAL ADVISOR ISMAIL ON ROME, CHAD/JEM, AND
VISA HUMILIATIONS

REF: A. KHARTOUM 616

[1](#)B. USUN NEW YORK 372

[1](#)C. STATE 40950

[1](#)D. KHARTOUM 631

[1](#)E. KHARTOUM 628

Classified By: CDA Alberto M. Fernandez, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: Sudan decided to keep its high-level delegation in Rome - despite the majority of the US delegation being "comprised of low-level officials", to demonstrate its seriousness - said Presidential Advisor Mustafa Othman Ismail. Ismail suggested that the second round of talks should occur before the last week of May if possible, when President Bashir and other senior officials will be in Japan, so that SE Williamson can meet with President Bashir. Ismail said the GOS has information that JEM plans to attack Kordofan and requested US intervention with Chad and JEM. Ismail also described the "humiliations" of senior Sudanese Presidential Advisors such as himself routinely being stopped for several hours in secondary screening at US immigration every time they visit the US on official business. End summary.

[1](#)2. (C) Presidential Advisor Dr. Mustafa Osman Ismail told CDA Fernandez April 23 that the Sudanese decided to send a high-level delegation to Rome to demonstrate how serious they are about the negotiations with the U.S. Presidential advisor Nafie Ali Nafie called him after Nafie had arrived in Rome and met with the US delegation, and had seen that most of the US delegation was relatively low level. Despite this, both Nafie and Ismail agreed that it was important to keep all of the senior members of the government in Rome for the duration of the talks. Ismail noted that SE Williamson would testify the afternoon of April 23 and said President Bashir had commented to him, "They will send rockets against him (Williamson) and we will see if he can defend himself." Mustafa observed that SE Williamson seemed to have the support of President Bush and expressed hope that the US will remain serious about this process. Ismail requested that if possible the next visit should occur before the last week in May so that SE Williamson can meet with President Bashir. He said President Bashir will be in Japan the last week in May.

[1](#)3. (C) Ismail turned the discussion to JEM and Chad, and said the Sudanese government had information that JEM leader Khalil Ibrahim intended to attack Kordofan in the near future in order to widen the war in Western Sudan beyond Darfur. Ismail said he himself might travel to Ndjamena to tell the

Chadians that they should not support Khalil's provocations. Ismail urged the US to pressure the Chadians to intervene with JEM as well, and to end their support for JEM. Ismail lamented that "Abdul Wahid Nour will one day make a deal but Khalil Ibrahim is very difficult and doesn't respond to pressure." CDA Fernandez noted that in this regard Khalil is similar to the NCP, to which Ismail laughed and nodded in agreement, "he was once one of us". Ismail went on to claim there are three people destabilizing Darfur - Khalil Ibrahim, Chadian Defense Minister Mohammed QfQ-informed Ismail that due to ongoing visa security issues, the visa of President Bashir's brother had been revoked (ref c) and that CDA Fernandez would meet with Abdallah Hassan Al Bashir the following day to inform him of this and let him know that he could reapply for a visa any time he wished (ref d). CDA noted that there are US visa security issues with some figures in the regime because of the regime's former links to Al-Qaeda, but offered to intervene when necessary to make sure that important individuals in the government can travel to the US when

KHARTOUM 00000637 002 OF 002

needed. Ismail thanked CDA for informing him of the issue, noting that it could have turned into an embarrassing incident with damaging repercussions. Ismail commented that every time he travels to the US as part of an official delegation, including his last trip to the UN two weeks ago, he is forced to go into secondary screening at immigration, sometimes for several hours. "This is humiliating for us," said Ismail, noting that when relations between the US and Sudan are on the upswing, Sudanese officials don't complain about this treatment, but that when things are going badly "everything becomes a big issue."

15. (C) Ismail noted that Americans don't recognize the importance of highly symbolic issues to Sudanese (and Arabs) involving personal treatment and dignity, like visas, airport treatment, and Guantanamo. "Look at all the trouble that resulted from the 25 mile limitation!," he exclaimed (this was the 25 mile limit place on a U.S. visa for President Al-Bashir and party in Havana for the 2006 UNGA, this "personal slight" has entered Sudanese political folklore as one factor in deteriorating relations in 2006-2007). "You know that the personal is everything to us. There are things you get not because of policy but because of personal relationships and Sudan is no different from other Arab and Islamic countries." CDA Fernandez agreed that this is certainly his experience in Sudan and past assignments in the area.

16. (C) Comment: This is the third meeting we have had this week (ref a, c, d) in which Sudanese officials have offered a relatively positive read-out of the Rome meetings. They are relatively pleased with the atmosphere of the meeting but also clearly hoping for additional progress at the next round of talks, where they would like to see additional specificity on what they US absolutely must have, and what the US will be willing to offer the Sudanese in return. It is clear the Sudanese see a benefit merely in talking to the US about a possible improvement in relations, but soon we will need to define more clearly precisely what the outcomes of these discussions will be for both sides. Ismail's warning about JEM/Chad/Kordofan should be taken seriously because further attacks by Khalil Ibrahim and JEM, especially outside Darfur, are bound to provoke a brutal regime reaction.
FERNANDEZ